619 193 137 121

Families and Settlements in the Pangwe Area. Map 2

1: Tessmann--xiv E-5 (1904-1909) 1913 FH9 Fang FH9

252 (a) Cassava rolls or cassava loaves (mbə̀m I-mbə̀m, ebɔ̄bɔ́).

These require more time to prepare, from four to five days. The roots are placed in water holes just as they come from the plantation, that is, with the rind and without being cut into pieces (with the exception of very large roots which are cut in two). /Fig. 98 appears here in the original text./ /154/ /Figs. 99, 100, and 101 appear here in the original text./ This is done in order to draw the poison out of them. Ntum and Fang women attach no importance to the kind of water in which they place the roots; indeed, they seem to prefer swampy areas, such as raffia swamps. In those places one often sees the remains of the cassava on the thoroughly muddy water and along the edge of the puddle; over [76] the remains an enormous number of butterflies floats like a cloud, especially blue and white Pieridae, varieties of Papilio, among them the large blue Zalmoxis. These holes, which have a strong odor of both mud and cassava, are valuable places of discovery for the collector. In the northern region, on the other hand, among the Jaunde, Bene, and many Bulu, cassava is not placed in the swamp but on the sandy bottom of clear, flowing streams, near the bank where the water flows more slowly. Also they take the trouble to block off a stream so that only a little water can run through. Then the roots are placed on the bottom downstream from the dam. Perhaps the reason for placing the cassava roots in clear, running ● [33] water in the northern region is that there are few raffia swamps in that area. The cassava has to lie in the still or very gently flowing water for a period of from three to four days, three days in the case of younger roots and four days in the case of older, strong roots. After this period the woman takes the roots out and by hand pulls off the bark together with the firmer fibrous layer underneath. This job presents no difficulties. Then she lightly washes the roots on the spot and pulls out the center rib. With both hands she presses the cassava into a ball in the water -- during this process it exudes a whitish sap -- and places the balls in a basket lined with leaves. 253 Further preparation is done in the house; there the cassava is pul- 254 verized on the grindstone, and the powder is poured on leaves which the woman picked on her return from the swamp. In the south these

3: Trézenem--1 E-5 (ca. 1935) 1936 FH9 Fang FH9

ETHNOGRAPHIC NOTES
on
THE FAN TRIBES OF THE MIDDLE OGOOUÉ (GABON)

by
Édouard Trézenem

Notice

121 The notes which we present here do not aim to be a monograph on the entire Fan [Fang] nation but only a purely objective description of the present life of the Fan tribes which inhabit the Ogooué region. This description, moreover, does not pretend to be without gaps.

121 184 On many points, particularly regarding the religious life, the customs of these tribes may appear to be quite different from those described by the authors who have spoken about the Fan and even about those tribes which live farther inland, towards the lands of the Woleu-N'tem or of the Ivíndo [River]. In the Ogooué [area], these differences seem to be due to continued contact with Europeans, to the influence of Christian missions which have a catechist in each village, and to the expansion of relations with neighboring peoples.

We will not discuss these in principle, nor will we attempt to follow the progressive evolution of the tribes, having in mind only a work of documentation.

The Country and Its Inhabitants

[131] 133 137 The region where we began our inquiry is situated below the equator, in Gabon, in the [area of the] middle Ogooué. In this, a land largely of forests, one finds in the west, on the banks of the river and its tributaries (the Abanga at the right, the Mbumi at the left) low, heavily forested areas, flooded in the rainy season, from which arise a few narrow ridges [66], some dozen meters in height at the most, where villages have been established. Many marshes, and lakes

133 full of fish, hold water during the worst of the dry season.

137 In going up the Ogooué one meets, a little before the island of Talagouga, the first spurs of the north-south oriented African plateau, still low (N'Djolé has an altitude of 63 meters), the elevation of which increases rapidly as one goes towards the interior. Upstream from N'Djolé, the Ogooué ceases to be navigable. Broken by rapids, it is no longer passable except for specially equipped dugout canoes. About a dozen kilometers beyond the influx of the Okano, the aspect of the country changes: the large forest gives way to great stretches of prairie dotted with wooded groves, on the hillsides formations of quartz blocks are seen and oil palms, which were not present downstream, begin to appear. Mt. Otoumbi dominates the landscape from its 700 meters, and the rounded hillsides of the ranges bordering the river recall some features of the Vosges.

133 In the N'Djolé region, the Ogooué receives as its chief tributaries: to the right, the Bingola, Okano, and Abanga; to the left, shorter rivers of less volume, the Leledi, Lebe, and Mbumi. Only Abanga is navigable, and this for only about 70 kilometers.

132 The climate is hot and humid, with alternating dry and rainy seasons:
133 from October to January, the rainy season; from January to March, a very hot, dry season, the ripening time of almost all the forest fruits; from March to June, again violent rains, great tornadoes, and severe heat; and from June to October, a comparatively cool, dry season, with cessation of growth for some varieties of forest vegetation. At this time the waters are very low; sand banks can be seen everywhere in the Ogooué some of whose tributaries, like the Misanga, have only a trickle of water. The seasons are obviously not as strictly demarcated as this, and one season often encroaches on the other.

101 Today this whole region is almost entirely inhabited by the Fan who,
563 since their arrival, probably at the beginning of the nineteenth century, have either driven out or decimated the [other] inhabitants, the Okata and Bapinji [Bapindji] up the N'Djolé (of the Okata there is now only one village left, and the Bapinji have completely disappeared) and the Bakele [Bakale, Bakelle (?)] downstream. The latter still have some villages in the interior on the left bank, but only one on the edge of the river.

101 Fan is the name they give themselves. Pahouin [Pahuin] is the one by which they are commonly known and which, according to Haug (1)

1. Ernest Haug, "Notice géographique et ethnographique sur le Bas-Ogooué"

Bundj'e
Kombe
Mpeo

101 present-day Bafia, in numerous villages all along the right bank of
131 the M'Bam, meeting the Tsinga at the Owama or Afama River and reaching as far as the vicinity of the Yambasa. Others, known as Kombe, were located much farther east on the Maloko River and are probably under the jurisdiction of the Kombe villages, now claimed to be Mvele and Bavek villages (on the vehicular road in the north).

On this Moisel map, the Bundju occupied the whole vast territory, triangular in shape, which lies between the M'Bam and the Sanaga rivers.

173 According to the reports of the administrator Cournarie, resumed by the administrator Relly, these peoples lost all cohesion after the Babute invasion in the middle of the last century. According to their traditions, the Kombe were enslaved and consequently dispersed. The Bundju, said to be related to the Mangisa, first crossed the Sanaga. Later, when the Germans pushed the Babute back towards the north, the Bundju, greatly reduced in numbers, recrossed the Sanaga and returned to their former lands.

080 It would be interesting to investigate these former Bet from the linguistic viewpoint and to find out how much of their former language remains with them. The study should not be made on the basis of entire zones; rather it should be carried out almost village by village throughout a whole area where these peoples may be found juxtaposed and overlapping one another all along a vehicular road. No doubt the study will /sic/ shed but little light on the problem of origins, but it will clearly show what G. Tessmann calls the "Bat-Mbam" languages.

THE NGEMBO

131 Location: 11°15 to 11°30 long.
101 4°30 to 4°55 north lat.

Physical and Human Geography. The Ngemo are widely dispersed on the left bank of the M'Bam, in the valley of its tributary, the
● 133 Ngemo. This little river has a minimal water supply during the dry season, but during the rainy months, on the contrary, it swells beyond the river bed and floods the banks, sometimes for a considerable distance. This is a prairie region adorned with thin shrubs. Near branches of the river, a few clumps of raffia palms can be seen.

131 Physical Geography. Area: 2, 520 square km.

133 The country of the Eton is made up of hills and plateaus; it drifts
137 gently down from the heights of the country of the Ewondo to the valley of the Sanaga River. The border of the great southern forest crosses the territory from south to north; the westerly two-thirds of the area are covered with forest, and the last third is prairie. The Sanaga borders the country only in the northwest and northeast, for the greater part of the loop [misprint in French text: bouche for boucle. See map.] of the river is occupied by the Mangisa. /69/

161 Human Geography. Population: 111, 738 inhabitants
Density: 44. 3 persons per square km.

173 It is impossible to say whether the Eton should be counted among the Beti populations who were dislodged and crossed the Sanaga or whether they were among the first Pahouin to cross the Sanaga at the time of the invasion. Their traditions do not go back very far; they only tell of their departure from the fork of the M'Bam and the Sanaga. /Map 7/ The Eton say that after crossing the river in the direction of the present-day village of Nkolbogo, they fell upon the Mangisa who had already arrived, and then spread themselves throughout the territory which they occupy to this day.

361 The Eton are settled in large villates, whose hamlets line the length
487 of their many trails. At present their country is traversed by several roads on which heavy trucks can travel so that their products can reach Yaoundé and the railroad.

197 Language. With reference to this subject it seems best to refer the reader to the paragraph on linguistics in the chapter on the Mangisa, since the same question is raised for the two peoples. /70/

142 Physical Anthropology and Demography. The Eton are above average in height, mesocephalic, and platyrrhin.

143 Their blood-group ratio is typically Negro, with a relatively high proportion of the AB type:

O: 55. 7 percent; A: 13. 8 percent; B: 17. 5 percent; AB: 12. 9 percent;—index $\frac{[A+AB]}{[B+AB]}$: 0. 878.

141 Their height is /for the/ average: men 167. 8 cm.; women 159. 9 cm.

113 worth on the subject of the "Rite SSO" as it is practiced among the Eton and the Mangisa. The film was made in an Eton village in 1955.

THE EWONDO

101 These people are called Yaoundé (1) by the Europeans, but they call themselves Ewondo.

1. The etymology of this name is given nowhere. According to tradition, the name Ewundu is that of the original ancestor of the people; the prefixes ya, ye, and e occur frequently in Pahouin languages.

According to Nekes, the name means "peanut"; it would therefore be a nickname, because, they say, "They are as numerous as peanuts."

131 Location: 10°40 to 11°40 long.
3°10 to 4°05 north lat.

The Evunok branch: on a north-south trail at 10°05 long.
on an east-west trail 10°25 to 10°40 long.
3°10 to 3°25 north lat.

Physical Geography. Area: approximately 4, 320 square km.

133 137 The territory occupied by the Ewondo is a high plateau broken by little valleys. In its northern section may be found several high hills which divide the waters of the Sanaga Basin from those of the Nyong. The entire territory is within the great forest zone, but much of the land has been cleared because of the density of the population. /71/ The dividing line between forest and prairie runs east to west about 10 kilometers north of Yaoundé.

139 The river Nyong, at 3°30 north latitude, first borders the Ewondo country north to south and then crosses it from east to west before flowing into the territory of the neighboring Basa. Much further downstream it flows north to south by the settlement of the Evunok before reaching its mouth at the ocean.

133 The southeastern part of Ewondo territory is also watered by the high stream of the little river Lokoundje.

The whole country is very fertile, rich with food crops and beautiful groves of cacao trees.

Human Geography

161 Population: Ewondo (in the Yaounde subdivision)—70, 994 in 1946
" " " M'Balmayo ")—15, 359
" " " Lolodorf ")— 6, 674 in 1947
93, 027

Evuzok: 4, 273 inhabitants

The population density varies greatly in the different zones: the region north of the Nyong is most densely populated, 49.3 persons per square kilometer; south of the Nyong there are 13.1 persons per square kilometer; in Evuzok, 5 persons per square kilometer.

173 History. The Ewondo settled in their present habitat quite recently —one hundred and fifty years ago at most. According to their traditions, they began the last stage of their migrations somewhere on the right bank of the Sanaga near its junction with the M'Bam. They crossed the Sanaga about five generations ago, at the time when all the peoples north of the Sanaga suffered the consequences of pressure by the Fulbe. They spread southward, and some of them even crossed the Nyong and traveled in the "low" direction (west) toward the commercial roads.

It is believed that German expeditions first reached the Ewondo in about the year 1887 (during the exploration by Kund, Tappenbeck, and Weissenborn). The administrative "station" of Yaoundé was created in 1888, and its direction was placed in the hands of G. Zenker, a man of science whose name is not likely to be forgotten in the Cameroons.

According to most of the traditions, the Evuzok (1) were the last

[10] 1. Their name is said to be nothing but a nickname meaning "elephant's stomach," which was given them by the other Ewondo after a hunt which was followed by an unforgettable feast.

of the Ewondo to arrive during the last migration, and they were

113 Divinatory Practices of the Peoples in the District of Yaoundé/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes, 1936, No. 1, pp. 35-39.

Fraser, James George. "The Native Races of Africa and Madagascar," Anthologia Anthropologica (London: Percy Lund Humphries and Co., 1938), pp. 175-76.

Numerous unpublished studies on customs (by Cournarie, Joubert, and others), reports to the Bureau des Affaires Politiques (Bureau of Political Affairs) and among the documents of the S.E.C. /Société d'Etudes Camerounaises/, unpublished investigations on the subjects of shelter and subsistence.

Moisel map, G2, Jaunde.

THE BANE

131 Location: 11°15 to 11°55 long.
3°05 to 3°55 north lat.

Physical Geography. Area: about 2,736 square km.

The territory of the Bane borders on the Western side of the Ewondo country and stretches north to south from the vicinity of Yaoundé to 25 kilometers northeast of Eholowa and northwest of Sangmélima.

107 The country is located entirely within the forest zone, which is quite thinned out because of the density of population.

133 At 3°30 north latitude the river Nyong crosses the country from east to west. At that point it is a navigable canal. Further down, the river turns south and marks the boundary between the territories of the Bane and the Ewondo.

61 Human Geography. Total population: 58,309 inhabitants.

More than half of the total number of inhabitants in Bane territory live in the small area located north of the Nyong, where the population density is 40.1 per square kilometer. South of the Nyong, the density is 14.1 persons per square kilometer. /14/

174 History. Like their neighbors of the same Pahouin family, the Bane lived north of the Sanaga in the past before the last invasion. Their southward migration occurred at about the same time as that of the Ewondo, and was brought about by the same cause. The Bane crossed the Sanaga rather late, and found the Ewondo already settled on the other side. Therefore, they infiltrated little by little from north to south among the people who preceded them /Map 10/ They were not completely pacified until 1897.

113 Frazer, James George. "The Native Races of Africa and Madagascar," Anthologia Anthropologica (London: Percy Lund Humphries and Co., 1938), pp. 165-66.

Numerous unpublished reports by Bertaut, André Raynaud, E. André, and H. Richard, members of the administration, are to be found in the archives of the Bureau of Political Affairs (Bureau des Affaires Politiques) and among the documents of the S.E.C. /Société d' Etudes Camerounaises/.

Moisel Map, Ill 1 and 2, Kribi.

THE BULU

[3] [8] [36] The actual Bulu inhabit an area which stretches from east to west in a thin band from 10° to 12°10 longitude and extends from 2°35 to 3°15 north latitude toward the east. Toward the west their villages only extend along two parallel trails, then go in a single line to within 30 kilometers of the ocean.

North of this horizontal band, in an area which extends from 12° to 12°35 longitude and from 3°35 to 4°30 north latitude, are to be found the Yengono, the Yembama, and the Yelinda. We are including these groups among the Bulu on the authority of their traditions.

● [13] Physical Geography. The Bulu territory is a huge, very monotonous plateau covered with forest. It is situated at an altitude of 600 to 650 meters on the average, with a few hills rising 150 to 200 meters at most above the rest. The hills are round or conical in shape and generally wooded.

The actual Bulu country (an area of about 9,936 square km.) is watered, on the one hand, by little tributaries which flow from the left bank of the Nyong and form valleys going from southeast to northwest. In the east the branch called the Zaman flows for 60 kilometers, touches the only trail in the thickness of the forest at a distant spot, and meets the Dja River, a tributary of the Sanga /sic/, beyond 13° longitude.

36 [13] The Yengono, the Yembama, and the Yelinda are settled on a strip of land going from north to south in an area which is part prairie and part forest. From the plain of the Sanaga the country rises gradually, and in the northern part of the Yengono country a chain of hills separates the waters of the Sanaga and the Nyong basins. The three peoples are settled south of this line in the Nyong Basin

361 in a country full of valleys and woods. The territory covers about
133 1,728 square kilometers. /Map 13/

Human Geography

161 Population and density of each group:

True Bulu: 96,216 inhabitants; 9.59 persons per square km.

Yengono, Yembama, Yelinda: 12,987 inhabitants;
7.5 persons per square km.

Zaman: 1,407 inhabitants.

173 History. The Bulu say that they come from the east. Indeed, those who have surveyed the area with care say that "old natives can mark the sites of the villages in which they were born and those of their fathers. Going back generation by generation the track leads east." (1)

1. Bertaut, Droit coutumier des Boulous
(The Customary Law of the Bulu), p. 40.

174 By bringing together linguistic and ethnographic data it has been possible to determine that, during the first wave of the Pahouin invasion, the Bulu first followed the high valley of the Sanaga and then took a direction from north to south, which it has been possible to set at 12° to 12°30 longitude. They swamped the Maka, who were settled there before them, and chased them out of the entire territory. Traditions describe them as dividing into two groups once they reached present-day Sangmélima. One group spread throughout that section and moved toward the west; those who went furthest reached almost to the ocean, from which they were separated by only a few coastal populations.

The other group went toward the east into the great forest, and the Zaman pushed all the way to the Dja, 120 kilometers away.

But considering the assertion of B. Struck and Father Nekes that the Fang language influenced that of the Ewondo, we would seem justified in placing the Bulu settlement between the Ewondo and the Fang at a very recent time, for this influence was only possible through constant and direct contacts and intermingling, not by crossing over the Bulu to reach each other. In this case does linguistics enable us to date history?

113 Sud-Cameroun /Anthropometric Documents for a Study of the Major Peoples of the South Cameroons/," Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Camerounaises, No. 15-16 (Sept.-Dec. 1946), pp. 40-41.

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Bertaut, M. Le droit coutumier des Boulous. Monographie d'une tribu du Sud-Cameroun /The Customary Law of the Bulu. Monograph on a South Cameroons Tribe/," (Paris: 1935).

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THE MVELE

131 Location: 11°40 to 12°10 long.
2°45 to 4°20 north lat. south of the Sanaga River
Also from south to north at 4°20 to 4°35 north lat. and 11°40 long.

133 Physical Geography. Area: 2, 304 square kilometers south of the

133 Sanaga. The northern part of the Mvele territory is a high plateau which is covered by prairie interspersed with strips of forest. It is very well watered by tributaries and subtributaries of the Sanaga which flow calmly on broad river beds. Toward 4° north latitude a row of hills marks the dividing line between the waters of the Nyong and the Sanaga basins. Thus the entire southern portion of the Mvele country is part of the Nyong Basin. The last vestiges of the forest are to be found there, in addition to crops and many palm trees.

Human Geography

161 Population: south of the Sanaga: 35, 340 inhabitants in 1945
north of the Sanaga: 1, 655 inhabitants
density south of the Sanaga: 15.3 persons per square km.

117 History. The movement of the Bakute was also responsible for pushing the Mvele back to the left bank of the Sanaga in the middle of the last century. A few enclaves remained wedged in between the various small groups who sought refuge in the area between the M'Bam and the Sanaga Valley. Therefore, the Mvele of the north and those of the south are really part of the same group.

The various authors are not in agreement on the question of a kinship between the Mvele and the large group called Yesum. According to Engelhardt, these are two separate groups. G. Tessmann, on the contrary, believes that the Yesum must be considered part of the Mvele "complex."

34 When the Germans first reached the Mvele they were struck by the unusual appearance of their villages. Engelhardt describes them as follows: "Unlike the rest of the Fang, who place their huts in rows on both sides of trails, /83/ the Mvele build theirs in a star-shape around a central square or with no regard for symmetry." (Deutsches Kolonialblatt, 1902, p. 421.)

487 From the beginning of the German occupation, the trails in the
489 territory served as trade routes to the south over which the products of the east were transported toward Yaounde and to the coast. At the present time these products are carried both on the road that crossed the Mvele country in the south (from Akonolinga to Yaounde) and on the eastern highway (from Nanga-Eboko to Yaounde). /Map 14/

197 Language. According to Engelhardt the Mvele tongue is very similar to that of the Ewondo and seems to be but a dialect of the

Fiche Yaoundé Yaoundé

[13] Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes Camerounaises, No. 10 (June 1945), pp. 55-78.

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Important unpublished reports of the administrateurs Courtarie and Chaulenr.

THE YESUM AND THE YEBEKANGA

[3] Location: 11°55 to 12°20 long.
5°05 to 5°35 north lat.

Physical Geography. Area: Yesum: about 1,296 square km.
Yebekanga: about 315 square km.

• [33] The country of the Yesum appears on a map as an irregular four-sided figure. The territory stretches through the plain of the Sanaga

Yeben
Yebekanga

133 River and is watered by its tributaries and subtributaries. Throughout the northern region these flow through thick strips of forest in the prairie. The southern part of the country is still within the forest zone.

The Yebekanga are neighbors of the Yeum to the east. They occupy a triangular area in the valley of the Téné; the land is flat and monotonous, a prairie broken by thickets and strips of forest.

161 Human Geography. Population: Yeum: 8,075 inhabitants
Yebekanga: 747 inhabitants

Densities: Yeum: 6.1 persons per square km.
Yebekanga: 2.57 persons per square km.

174 We have noted that the first German ethnologists were not agreed on the origin of the Yeum or their ethnic relationship to other Pahouin /Bi/ peoples. Some saw a Yeum-Mvele complex, others, on the contrary, a complex of Yeum-Bulu.

Lastly, the administrateur Chaulour states in a 1933 report that among the peoples of "Fang" origin in the subdivision of Nanga-Eboko, "the chief nucleus is comprised of the Yeum .... According to their oral traditions they are descended from the ancestor Ngombe who lived in the country of Djoum." According to this new version of their origin the Yeum came from the south, having been separated quite late from the Bulu; according to the two German versions, on the other hand, they entered the country from the north at the time of the Pahouin arrival.

To go back to G. Tessmann's classification--which may be only provisional, since future studies may reveal new data--we note that there is no absolute contradiction between the Mvele-Yeum and Bulu-Yeum theses except as regards the direction of migration, for both hypothetical complexes are Pahouin, regardless of whether the migration occured at a later or earlier date, in one direction or the other. /Map 11/

In the midst of the Yeum is the settlement of the Yemfang, comprised of no more than a few hundred persons. The administrateur Chaulour was able to determine that the latter group also came from the south and that they are closely related to the people of the Bulu region.

Mr. Bernot, for his part, notes the presence of the Yeum among peoples living in the Bulu territory, and we find them listed in his nomenclature. (1)

Physical and Human Geography

Area: about 1, 602 square km.

Population: 14, 500 inhabitants

Density: 9.2 persons per square km.

All of the Yekaba country is located on the prairie which extends through the plain on the right bank of the Sanaga River. The country has few valleys; it is watered by tributaries of the Sanaga, the Tédé and the Nyé, which are bordered by forest.

The information provided by various observers (the administrators Chauleur, Cournarie, and Boudineau) gives no clear indication as to the general grouping in which we should place this group of peoples settled on the right bank of the Sanaga. All French maps give the general name of Badjia, and under it are classed several groups not all of whom are known to have a common origin. The name "Badjia" may be but a nickname (according to Boudineau). German maps use only the name "Yekaba, " concerning which Chauleur also says: "Among these tribes (of the Badjia group), the most important is the Yekaba, and it gives it's name to the region. " (1)

1. Unpublished report of February 28, 1933.

According to Cournarie, the Yekaba and several kindred groups originate among the Yalongo who live on the northern bank of the Sanaga, directly north of their present habitat. Under pressure from the Bebum, who were themselves pushed back by the Fulbe, these peoples fled south and crossed the Sanaga River. It is possible that at first they occupied all of the territory north of the Nyong, together with their neighbors the Bamvele. Later they were pushed back toward the Sanaga by the migration of the Yesum-Yebekanga coming from the south. (2) These two waves moving in opposite directions clashed and interpenetrated, producing the present confusion. The Yekaba found themselves split in two by the Yebekanga, who formed /81/ an enclave in their midst. The peoples of the left bank of the Sanaga (in the administrative subdivision of Nanga-Eboko) are thus composed of two different elements: the somewhat older inhabitants who came originally from the north, went south, and were pushed back, and the more recent arrivals who came from the south and pushed back the former.

These two groups, one coming from the north, the other from the south, and arriving at different times, are probably both part of the

[8] We connect the Bobili with the Bamvele because, on the one hand, they do not appear separately from the Bele on the Moisel map (Dume, G3), and, on the other, the traditions pertaining to their origins are not precise enough to permit us to draw a conclusion differing from that of the Germans.

Physical and Human Geography

[3] Area: 2,472 square km.

[6] Population: Bamvele—18,452 inhabitants
Bobili—6,247 inhabitants

Density: 10 persons per square km.

[133] The Bamvele are close neighbors of the Yekaba and the Yebekolo in the north; they occupy a large homogeneous territory on the border between forest and prairie. The country is almost flat, extending into the Sanaga plain and borders the river for about 30 kilometers. The territory is watered by several broad tributaries of the Sanaga. In the east, one of these tributaries, the Long, serves as a frontier between the Bamvele and the Babute, who surround them everywhere except in the south. A few Bamvele villages have been established on the right bank of the Long, and they border the Bertoua road for a few kilometers. [64]

[11] Like their neighbors, the Yekaba, the Bamvele in their traditions tell that their origins are to be sought among the Yalongo north of the Sanaga. They too were pushed by the Babute who were under pressure from the Fulbe; they fled south and crossed the Sanaga a little more than a hundred years ago. Their history is identical with that of their neighbors, the Yekaba. /Map 17/ /89/

[13] The Bobili believe that they are native to the territory, but they say that in former times their country extended west, beyond the Long. Therefore, the impact upon them of the Babute and Fulbe movements would have been very slight. (1)

1. Unpublished report of Mr. Brothier-Ouhre for May, 1945.

[11] The administrator Chaulcur carried out prolonged research in an attempt to untangle the network of peoples on the banks of the Sanaga. He does not feel that he can make a statement about the remote origins of the Yalongo, but he poses the following problem: "Could they be related to the Ba-yoka of the Congo who emigrated south

THE YEBEKOLO

Location: 12°08 to 12°45 long.
3°50 to 4°20 north lat.

Physical and Human Geography

Area: about 1,950 square km.
Population: 23,291 inhabitants
Density: 11.9 persons per square km.

The territory of the Yebekolo, in the form of a cornucopia laid on its side, is all to be found in the basin of the Nyong. The river forms its southern boundary. The tributaries on the right bank have broad beds and, in the vicinity of the Nyong, often overflow so that the valleys are frequently flooded. /90/ This is a large territory, covered with forest and quite marshy.

Large villages are found here. While the food crops are not poor, they are not very abundant. The people who live near the Nyong supplement their food supply by fishing and hunting.

It is difficult to say what may be the remote origins of this people. Their oral traditions (as reported by Mr. Tremesaygues) speak of their ancestor as being of Yambasa stock and, therefore, as having lived about 200 kilometers west of their present settlement, north of the Sanaga. /Map 18/ Moving eastward, the Yebekolo met first the Omvang and then the Maka, whom they pushed back to their present habitat.

The German maps, however, do not confirm these traditions. Also based on traditions, upon which linguistic data is often superimposed, they show all the Yebekolo as part of the "Mvele complex" (see detailed maps in Deutsches Kolonialblatt, 1907) under the name "Pangwe." It is possible that a borrowing of language occurred here—for a linguistic fact provides clues rather than permanent solutions to ethnographic problems.

When the Germans arrived in the territory of the Yebekolo (1904-1905), the latter submitted to them without resistance. The new occupants found them settled on the big eastern trails leading to Dounoé. From that time on the trails were improved, and the Yebekolo thus found themselves situated on the big trade routes by which the products of the eastern forest were taken to the coastal regions. /91/

THE OMVANG

131 Location: the Omvang are split into two sections
One section: 12°15 to 12°50 long.
3°55 to 4°05 north lat.
Other section: 12°45 to 13° long.
4°05 to 4°28 north lat.

Physical and Human Geography

Area: in the west—about 390 square km.
in the east—about 660 square km.

161 Population: in the west—4, 852 inhabitants
in the east—7, 520 inhabitants

Density: in the west—12.4 persons per square km.
in the east—11 persons per square km.

131 The Omvang inhabit a forest country which is quite poor in the west but rich in the east. Those who are furthest west, northwest of Ayos, are on the banks of the Nyong, and that is the only place where they have access to a road. The territory of the eastern Omvang is 133 in the valley of the Ayong, a tributary from the right of the Nyong, but their country does not reach as far as the river itself. However, the stream is navigable everywhere so that the river can be easily reached. Ayong flows first of all through a forest which thins out toward the south and is replaced by beautiful clusters of raffia palms.

173 The Omvang know little of their history. They know only that less than a century ago they still occupied the entire territory north of the Nyong; they were in constant contact with the Yebekolo and were sometimes their masters, sometimes their slaves. They were warriors trained in guerilla warfare, and in the end they attacked the neighboring Maka and wrested from them the land which is their present habitat. The advance of the Yebekolo /92/ split them into two sections. Only the intervention of the Germans in 1904-1905 reestablished peace in the area.

177 P. Chaulet does not agree with the view that the Omvang are a people of the Pahouin group. His arguments, based only on data concerning local migrations, seem to be no more valid than those he opposes.

241 The eastern Omvang, settled in a fertile region are hard-working and good farmers. In addition to their food crops they care for large

THE MBIDA-MBANE AND THE MVOGO-NIENGE

Location: Mbida-Mbane—11°40 to 12°15 long.
4°20 to 4°50 north lat.
Mvogo-Nienge—12° to 12°28 long.
4°20 to 4°45 north lat.

Physical Geography. Areas: Mbida-Mbane—1, 548 square km.
Mvogo-Nienge—710 square km.

The origins of the Mbida-Mbane and the Mvogo-Nienge seem to be similar enough for us to discuss them together here.

Geographically they are neighbors. The Mbida-Mbane are located on both sides of the Nyong River, in two sections of about equal size in the north and in the south.

The Mvogo-Nienge are their neighbors to the east, south of the Nyong.

Both peoples occupy fertile forest regions. The river Nyong flows northeast to southwest through the middle of Mbida-Mbane country. The Mvogo-Nienge inhabit its banks for only a few kilometers, upstream from Akonolinga.

Human Geography

Population: Mbida-Mbane—10, 707 inhabitants
Mvogo-Nienge—7, 291 inhabitants

Densities: Mbida-Mbane—12. 8 persons per square km.
Mvogo-Nienge—10. 26 per square km.

History. The traditions of the Mbida-Mbane as well as those of the Mvogo-Nienge tell of ancestors living on the right bank of the Sanaga, as do those of the Yedoma, the Tengwas, and the Tembaens (the last two groups have been classified by Tessmann among the Bulu). It is said that three slaves of the same master, whose lives were in danger as a consequence of a great palaver, escaped and crossed the Sanaga. Since they were slaves, naturally no mention is made of their ethnic family. Their descendants comprise a number of the peoples who live in the environs of the Nyong at the present time.

Both groups live in a fertile country where the cultivation of food crops may be found adjacent to prosperous cacao and coffee plantations. The inhabitants on the banks of the Nyong supplement their diets with fish.

/1/

Chapter 1

Geographical Location and Climate

[3] The Pahouin country covers about 180, 000 square kilometers, from the middle Sanaga (4° 30' N) to the mouth of the Ogooué (1° 20' S) in latitude, from the Atlantic (9° 30' E) to the middle Sanga (14° E) in longitude. The inhabitants are politically under the jurisdiction of the Cameroons, Spanish Guinea, and French Equatorial Africa (Gabon and Middle Congo).

[33] The country appears essentially as a plateau of rocks, crystalline in the north, metamorphic in the south, with somewhat worn, intrusive domes, separated from the sea by a worn mountain range of rarely more than 1, 000 meters cut by the gorges of coastal rivers. The mean altitude varies from 500 to 700 meters up to the deep fault of the lower Ogooué Valley.

The watershed between the Congo and the coastal river basins bends toward the southeast from the Nkolomeadim (the mountain-of-the-waters) massif in the Sangmélima subdivision. The principal tributary of the Congo, by way of the Sanga, is the Dja (N'Goko). The principal coastal rivers are the Sanaga and the Nyong, the N'Tem (Campo), the Muni, and the Ogooué.

[12, 105] The climate is of the humid equatorial type, modified by the altitude and characterized by a double alternation of dry and rainy seasons. The time measure of the Pahouin is the mbo, about six lunar cycles (ngom), and the solar year is divided as follows: (1)

1. The dates are approximately valid for the Cameroons-Gabon border. The terms are in Benkoe; in Fang they would be: oyum, ngôn, or ngôñ.

mid-June to mid-December: ôsôn (little dry season) and su'u (great rainy season)

mid-December to mid-June: ôzeg (great dry season) sometimes characterized by bikome (small rains)

Mean temperatures and rainfall are indicated on the table on page 3.